

**PEHPP 2019****Pedagogical Education: History, Present Time, Perspectives****ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TO HEALTH AND BAD HABITS**

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***Abstract***

The health of student youth, their attitude to healthy lifestyle and bad habits are aspects that are reflected in this article. The urgency of the topic is connected with at least two things: first, with the fact that the problem of low culture of self-preserving behavior is most relevant for young students, including university children; secondly, with the fact that the students' skills of taking care of their health is a prerequisite for preserving the health of the nation, a factor that will affect both the immediate future of the country and the historical prospects of Russia as a whole. The paper presents the initial data of the lognithed sociological survey of students of Novgorod State University, which served as the information base of the article. The authors proceeded from the idea that the institutional environment of the university is a kind of a platform that can be significant in the reproduction of students' health. The paper outlines the nature of the manifestations of individual parameters of self-preserving behavior of student youth and the prevailing trends of reproduction of student's health. Internal and external social factors that influence the health of student youth over a long period of study (4 years) are analyzed. The dynamics associated with the attitude of different social groups within students to health and bad habits are presented. The information base obtained in the study may later form the basis for the development of practical recommendations and methods to preserve the health of university youth.

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**Keywords:** Healthy lifestyle, bad habits, students, self-preserving behaviour.

## **1. Introduction**

The problem related to the attitude of student youth to health and bad habits became especially relevant in the national social science in the early 21st century when the negative trends of the 1990s put society before the need for radical change in this area. Interest in the health of student youth is also relevant because of the social importance of this group, which many researchers consider as a reserve of the corpuses of future managers and professionals responsible for the preservation and development of society as a whole and its individual segments. Therefore, the research interest in healthy lifestyle of students and those factors that affect the attitude of students to health, for many years continues to remain in the field of view not only domestic, but also foreign researchers that once again confirms the relevance of this topic.

## **2. Problem Statement**

In the national social science the low activity of health saving in the student environment has been repeatedly noted (Belova, 2008; Demkina, 2016; Ivakhnenko, 2018). Anxiety about the health of modern Russian students has led to an increase in research activity in the analysis of students' inclusion in bad habits, in understanding the real scale of the processes of tobacco smoking and alcoholization in the student environment, that proved relevant for both central (e.g., MSU and RUDN) and regional domestic universities (Filonenko, Nikulina, Patrakov, & Kovtun, 2018; Medic & Osipov, 2003; Pit, Zakharchenko, & Poriadin, 2015; Puzanova & Tertyshnikova, 2017; Student Health..., 2012). The conceptual basis of the relationship between education and health was laid by foreign researchers in the Grossman (2008) practice, which recorded a positive relationship between education and the health of students. At the same time, various statistics on the health of students gave reason to doubt this model, which raised the question of its theoretical refinement and filling with empirical research materials. The relationship of risk factors (smoking, alcohol consumption, etc.) with health is considered on the example of different social groups in different countries (Izutkin, 2014).

The above-described contradictions between the need for the health of university youth and the passive behavior of some students to preserve and restore health during their studies became the basis for the Sociology Laboratory of Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University sociological survey in 2018, which aims are to answer the question - how negative processes in health are characteristic for students of the regional university.

## **3. Research Questions**

**3.1.** What is the attitude of university students to their health in general and within certain social groups?

**3.2.** What is the prevalence of bad habits in the student environment?

**3.3.** What is the degree of awareness in the student environment of the dangerous nature of bad health habits?

#### 4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the article is to analyze students' self-esteem of their health as a subjective indicator of self-preserving behavior and factors influencing it, as well as analysis of the main behavioral risks (smoking, alcohol consumption, etc.) in relation to health of student youth.

#### 5. Research Methods

5.1. The study was conducted among students of 1-4th year of education at NovSU.

5.2. The questionnaire was chosen as the main method of the study, in which students were offered a questionnaire as a document, the answers to which were received in self-complete mode.

5.3. To ensure that the obtained data are representative, the sample was built in several stages:

- In the first stage, the volume of selective aggregates at the level of the entire university and the size of each course of study was determined. At this stage, the gender distribution of students was also taken into account.
- In the second phase, groups within each of the university divisions were randomly selected. This selection was carried out by mechanical sampling with a certain selection step.

As a result, one in four student groups were selected to conduct the survey inside the institutes. As a result, the total number of surveyed students was 410 people. 119 1-st year students were interviewed, 112 2nd year students were interviewed, 93 people were interviewed among the 3rd year students and 86 4th year students.

#### 6. Findings

*Health assessment.* In the analysis of students' assessment of their health, the researchers proceeded from the idea that this self-esteem can act as a kind of starting point for health characteristics, and serve as a real indicator of students' health. The last conclusion was confirmed in the nationwide samples when comparing the data of self-assessments of health with the data of medical records (the degree of compliance was at the level of 70-80%). A comparative analysis of the self-assessment of students' health in courses is presented in Table 01.

**Table 01.** Self-assessment of students' health, %

Self-assessment of health		Overall	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
1.	Good condition	32.0	40.0	38.8	29.8	14.1
2.	Occasionally get sick	47.0	36.7	44.8	52.1	58.8
3.	Get sick quite often	8.9	8.3	6.9	8.5	12.9
4.	Have chronic diseases	11.1	14.2	9.5	9.6	10.6
5.	Didn't answer	1.0	0.8	0.0	0.0	3.6
6.	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The data show that the majority of students consider their health to be quite satisfactory (the amount of answers "good" and "occasionally get sick" is 79%). In total, 20% of respondents pointed out the

presence of chronic diseases or the fact that they get sick quite often. Comparing the data from the courses of study, we can specify a noticeable dynamics on the decrease in positive assessments of their health and the increase in the proportion of students who have chosen the answer "occasionally get sick", i.e. the factor of age in the self-esteem of students health is beginning to play a significant role.

Another finding may be connected with gender traits in students' assessment of health, where young men are more likely than girls to rate their health as "good." This figure is 2 times higher among young men than among girls (23.1% and 45.7%, respectively). The proportion of those who chose the answer "occasionally sick" is less among boys than among girls (39% and 52.2%, respectively). The tendency for young men to overestimate self-assessment of health has already been noted by Russian researchers and has become a steady indicator of health disparities among young men and women.

The behaviour of young people in the health sector is largely shaped by parent families and the level of well-being of parent families has been chosen as a cumulative factor in the family environment affecting the health of students. Monitoring data show that proportion of those who rate their health as good is two times higher among students from well-to-do families than among students from families with low and critically low levels of wealth. Thus, the level of material well-being is a factor correlated with self-esteem of health.

*Bad habits.* According to the survey, smoking as a habit is common among a relatively small number of students. 14.7% of students answered positively to the question about smoking cigarettes and e-cigarettes. The distribution of smokers in the courses shows that their proportion is increasing from junior to senior courses. Thus, if among the 1st year students the number of smokers is 13.3%, then among the 4th year is 20%. Students can be objectively divided into the following groups: smoking every day (77.1%) and smoking not every day (22.9%). Evidence shows that smoking is associated with success in academic performance and self-esteem of health. For example, among the students who smoke, 55.8% said that they were studying "satisfactorily". About a third of non-smokers rated their health as "good", among smokers this figure was lower by 10.6%. There are twice as many smokers who have noted the presence of chronic diseases.

Separately, let's focus on the gender aspects of cigarette and e-cigarettes. The survey data show that the proportion of students smoking among young men is higher than among girls. While 18.9% of young men responded positively to the question of smoking, the proportion of girls who smoked is only 12%. In boys and girls, there is an increase in the proportion of smokers in the passing from junior to senior courses. Moreover, a significant increase in the proportion of smokers among young men is recorded during the passing from the 3rd to the 4th year of education (from 14.7% to 28.1%), among girls during the passing from the 2nd to the 3rd year of education (from 9.9% to 13.3%).

Another aspect of smoking is hookah smoking, which survey data show is no longer uncommon in the student environment. Thus, more than half of the surveyed students (58.6%) answered positively to the question: "Do you smoke a hookah?" However, among those who answered positively, there is a high proportion of those who smoked only once (24.6%). And for young men this group is 26.2% and for girls - 23.5%.

For a detailed analysis of the situation with smoking students, a question was added to a questionnaire about the time when they started smoking and the motivations for smoking. The majority of

students who smoke (75.4%) noted that they started smoking before entering the university (83.3% of girls and 67.7% of young men) and after entering the University- 21.3% (25.8% - young men, 16.7% of girls). If we note the most popular answers to the question about the reasons for smoking they are: "Smoking is a way to relax" (39.3%) and "For the Company" (37.7%). Less often students chose the options "Smoking was the norm in the family" (1.6%) and "The desire to look older" (1.6%). Also, 18.0% of smoking students chose the option "Other" (depression, stress, desire to try (because of interest), for young men - because of the army).

Characterizing smoking it is necessary to note its association with self-esteem of health of young people. Thus, while a third of non-smokers rated their health as "good", among smokers this figure was 10.6%. Among the students who smoke twice as many as those who have noted the presence of chronic diseases (smoking students 18%, non-smokers 9.9%).

*Alcoholic beverages.* As part of the monitoring, it was found that 58.6% of the surveyed students drink alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, strong and low-alcohol drinks). Roughly similar figures were recorded in 2017. (59%), which gives an opportunity to talk about the cultural legitimization of the consumption of alcoholic beverages by university students. 69% of students who drink alcohol began to consume them even before entering the university. Such opinions are typical for all types of alcoholic beverages preferred by students. One in four students (24.7%) admitted that he started drinking alcoholic beverages at the university.

According to the received data, there is a dependence on the consumption of alcoholic beverages associated with the course of study. Thus, students of the 4th year of education are more likely to drink alcohol than students of junior courses (Table 02).

**Table 02.** Drinking alcoholic beverages by students in general and on courses of study, %

Answer options	Courses				
	Overall	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year
Drink	58.6	55.8	56.9	56.4	67.1
Don't use	41.2	44.2	43.1	43.6	31.8
Didn't answer	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Analysis of the data showed gender differences in alcohol consumption. Girls were more likely to say that they drink alcoholic beverages than young men. Also, with the growth of the course, the proportion of students consuming alcoholic beverages (Table 03) is also growing.

**Table 03.** Consumption of alcoholic beverages depending on gender and course of study, %

Course	Young men		Girls	
	Drink	Don't drink	Drink	Don't drink
1	52.8	47.2	58.2	41.8
2	51.1	48.9	60.6	39.4
3	52.9	47.1	58.3	41.7
4	62.5	34.4	69.8	30.2

Comparing the level of alcohol consumption, taking into account the place of residence, some trends are revealed. Thus, the level of alcohol consumption is higher among students living with parents (61.5%). The lowest percentage of drinking students lives with relatives - 37.5%. The analysis of the data showed that the health of the students who participated in the survey is not a factor in the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

The survey showed that almost two-thirds of students (65.0%) prefer to drink alcohol on holidays. 29.2% of respondents drink alcohol several times a month. Another 4.9% of students drink alcohol several times a week. The frequency of consumption of alcoholic beverages depending on courses of study and gender, does not have significant differences.

Analyzing the popularity of certain alcoholic beverages among students, we can draw the following conclusions that the most popular drink is wine, which is preferred by 41.6% of the surveyed students. Beer takes the second place (25.5%); low-alcohol and strong alcoholic beverages are less popular (15.6% and 14.4%, respectively). There are significant gender differences in the preference for alcoholic beverages (Table 04).

**Table 04.** Students' answers to the question: "What alcoholic beverages do you drink most?", by gender (%)

Answer options	2018	
	Young men	Girls
Beer	32.6	21.4
Wine	29.2	48.7
Low-alcohol drinks, cocktails	5.6	21.4
Strong drinks	29.2	5.8
Energy drinks	2.2	0.6
Absinthe	1.1	0.0
Didn't answer	0.0	1.9
Total	100.0	100.0

In the table responses of students who drink alcoholic beverages are accepted for 100.0%

Based on the data, it can be noted that the girls give preference to wine, low-alcohol drinks and cocktails, and boys beer and strong alcoholic beverages.

*Students' attitude to "bad habits."* The existence of bad habits in the student environment is largely explained by such a factor as the existence of an exculpatory attitude among students. Researchers have already noted the phenomenon of "divided guilt" when the decline in personal responsibility for one's own health occurs against the background of the transfer of this responsibility to society or social groups, which becomes the basis for the formation of the students of mass indifference or positive attitude to bad habits. That's why the questionnaire, along with the questions about smoking and alcohol consumption, raised questions about the attitudes (exculpatory or condemning) characteristic of university student groups to bad habits (Table 05).

**Table 05.** The answers of NovSU students to the question "What is the attitude to smoking and drinking alcoholic beverages in the student environment?" (%)

Answer options	Smoking	Drinking alcoholic beverages
Justify	32.5	41.4
Difficult to answer	51.6	47.7
Condemn	13.3	8.4
Didn't answer	2.7	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0

In general, the data show that students have an exculpatory attitude of alcohol and smoking. Comparison of the results on the courses shows that if undergraduates have a 7-8% increase in the proportion of students who have difficulty with the answer, the same proportion of those who chose the answer "justify" decrease. The proportion of students choosing the option "condemn" does not change virtually from junior to senior year. Thus, if the proportion of students condemning smoking during the 1st year of education is 16.7%, then on the 4th course is 15.3%. Regarding the condemnation of the consumption of alcoholic beverages, the data show that if during the 1st year of education 00.8% chose the answer "condemn", only 8.2% chose this option at the 4th course.

A decisive change in the tolerant attitude to bad habits can be observed in the issue of the consumption and distribution of drugs. Most students are critical of drugs use and their sale (Table 06).

**Table 06.** Students who condemn drug use and distribution, in general and by gender, %

Answer options	Overall	Young men	Girls
Condemn drug use	57.8	58.5	57.4
Condemn the distribution and sale of drugs	62.7	62.8	62.5

Thus, students almost equally condemn the use and distribution of drugs, more than half of the total number of respondents spoke negatively. The monitoring did not record a difference in responses related to the course of study of the respondents. While 59.2 per cent of 1st-year students condemn drug use and 62.5 per cent condemn the distribution and sale of drugs, 57.6 per cent of 4th-year students were convicted of drug use and 60 per cent condemned the distribution and sale of drugs. It is clear from the presented data that students come to the university with an idea of drug addiction, which does not change during their years of study. Such a trend can be described as a tendency deserving closer attention.

## 7. Conclusion

Monitoring data have shown that the problem of preserving and promoting the health of student youth is multifaceted and requires consideration not only of medical but also socio-behavioral aspects of health. According to the authors of the article, one of the main aspects to achieve the greatest effectiveness in the issue of maintaining the health of young people is the formation of the attitude of students to their health as to the main value. All social and educational technologies should work at the university, counteracting negative trends in the health of young students.

## Acknowledgments

The article was prepared as part of the RSF grant 18-18-00047 "Research on the state of information flows in the Russian education system and the possibilities of optimizing them."

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